

Message Text

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46

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SUBJECT: VISIT OF CONGRESSMEN WILSON, BINGHAM AND RYAN TO

CAIRO: PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY; AUC STUDENTS; AND FOREIGN

MINISTER FAHMY

1. SUMMARY. VISIT OF CONGRESSMEN WILSON, BINGHAM AND RYAN TO CAIRO PROVIDED OPPORTUNITY FOR EXPOSURE OF CONGRESSMEN TO EGYPTIAN VIEWS AT UNUSUALLY DIVERSE LEVELS, AND DEMONSTRATED CONTINUED INTEREST BY GOE IN MAINTAINING HIGH-LEVEL CONTACTS WITH US CONGRESSIONAL VISITORS. NET EFFECT OF VISIT ON BOTH SIDES, HOWEVER, APPEARED TO BE SMALL.
END SUMMARY

2. THE IRST DISCUSSION OF SUBSTANCE BETWEEN THE CONGRESSMEN AND EGYPTIANS OCCURRED ON THE EVENING OF JAN 7, AT THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY. WHILE THEY HAD BEEN ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED TO MEET ONLY DEP SPEAKER ALI SAYED ALI, THE CONGRESSMEN WERE JOINED BY ASSEMBLY SPEAKER HAFEZ BADAWI. BADAWI'S APPEARANCE WAS UNANNOUNCED AND WAS UNUSUAL IN THAT, BECAUSE OF HIS LACK OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE ABILITY, BADAWI'S PAST MEETINGS WITH FOREIGNERS HAVE BEEN FEW. THE SPEAKER, HOWEVER, ENGAGED THE CONGRESSMEN IN DEBATE, MAKING AND REPEATING THE BASIC POINT THAT WHAT IS PAST IS PAST AND THAT EGYPT

IS LOOKING TOWARD A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US AND IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HIS PERFORMANCE WAS NOT PARTICULARLY IMPRESSIVE, BUT HIS PRESENCE ITSELF DEMONSTRATED AN UNUSUAL INTEREST BY EGYPTIANS IN
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HIGH-LEVEL PARLIAMENTARY RELATIONS WITH THE US. ON JAN 7, TOO, THE

CONGRESSMEN WERE TAKEN TO DINNER BY ASSEMBLY MEMBER DR. RUSHDI SAID.

3. ON JAN 8, THE CONGRESSMEN VISITED MR. STURE LINNÉR, CHIEF UNDP REPRESENTATIVE IN CAIRO; A GROUP OF STUDENTS AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY; AND FOREIGN MINISTER FAHMY. THE MEETING WITH THE STUDENTS WAS A HIGHLIGHT OF THE TRIP. THEIR QUESTIONS MOSTLY CONCERNED THE EXISTENCE OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL, WHICH NONE APPEARED TO ACCEPT AS A SINE QUA NON IN THE MIDDLE EAST, IN OPOSITION TO THE VIEWS OF THE CONGRESSMEN. AT ONE POINT, THE STUDENTS WERE ASKED WHAT KIND OF A SETTLEMENT THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE. THEY ANSWERED THAT A JUST SETTLEMENT WOULD SEE THE ELIMINATION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL AS A POLITICAL ENTITY AND THE CREATION OF A DEMOCRATIC SECULAR STATE IN ITS PLACE. IRONICALLY, THE IMMEDIATE AND GENERAL RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ABOUT WHETHER WAR WAS A VALID MEANS OF ATTAINING POLITICAL OBJECTIVES, WAS NO--BUT MOST, TOO, MADE THE POINT THAT IF DIPLOMACY COULD NOT SECURE A RETURN OF SINAI, THEN WARFARE WAS THE ONLY OTHER ALTERNATIVE .

3. THE FINAL MEETING HELD BY THE CONGRESSMEN WAS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER FAHMY. FAHMY WAS IN NO FRAME OF MIND TO AGREE WITH CONGRESSMAN BINGHAM'S VIEW THAT ISRAEL SHOULD NOT RETURN ALL OF SINAI. HE STATED THAT ISRAEL MUST WITHDRAW, BUT THAT ANY KIND OF SECURITY ARRANGEMENT WOULD BE PERMISSIBLE ON THAT BASIS. THE US COULD GIVE ARMS OF ALL KINDS AS LONG AS THE ISRAELIS STOPPED THE OCCUPATION OF ARAB TERRITORY. THERE COULD, FOR EXAMPLE, BE A UNILATERAL US GUARANTEE TO ISRAEL'S SURVIVAL. FAHMY CHARACTERIZED THE POSITION OF THE US AT GENEVA AND SUBSEQUENTLY AS BEING CONSTRUCTIVE, BUT GAVE NO DETAILS ON THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS OR PRESENT DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS. THE LAST HALF HOUR OF HIS CONVERSATION WAS DEVOTED TO AN ALMOST EXCLUSIVE MONOLOGUE UNDERSCORING THE EGYPTIAN TERRITORIAL IMPERATIVE IN SINAI. HE GENERALLY FINESSED QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE PALESTINIANS, JERUSALEM AND SYRIA.

5. THE VIEWS OF THE CONGRESSMEN ABOUT THE VISIT TO EGYPT WERE VARIED. CONGRESSMAN WILSON DEPARTED SAYING HE WAS CONVINCED THAT THERE COULD BE NO PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST UNTIL ISRAEL WITHDREW FROM ALL OF SINAI; CONGRESSMEN BINGHAM AND RYAN SAID THEY THOUGHT THE FONMIN'S STATEMENT REPRESENTED NOTHING

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MORE HAN THEY COULD READ IN THE NEWSPAPERS, BUT REMARKED VERY FAVORABLY ON THEIR RAP SESSION WITH THE STUDENTS AT AUC.
WILTS

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